



SPIRITUAL PRACTICES: GRATITUDE

A. WHAT Is The Spiritual Practice of Gratitude?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF GRATITUDE = acknowledging the goodness in our lives, AND then expressing appreciation to God as the source of that goodness.

B. WHY Should We Practice Gratitude?

1. Being grateful is being obedient. (Psalm 95:2, Hebrews 12:28, 1 Thessalonians 5:18)
2. God wants to bless us.
3. Gratitude strengthens and grows other virtues in our lives.
4. Gratitude counteracts sinful patterns and toxic attitudes like envy, greed, self-pity, jealousy, etc.
5. Gratitude is good for our minds and bodies.
6. Gratitude has a positive effect on our relationships.
7. Gratitude leads to more gratitude.

C. Obstacles To Practicing Gratitude

1. Busyness and distraction.
2. Our tendency to focus on the negative.
3. Envy and comparison.
4. Complacency.

D. Ideas on HOW to get started.

1. Prayer is the foundation.
2. Create a Gratitude Biblical Reference Sheet.
3. Gratitude Journal/Notebook (be specific!)
4. Get in the habit of thanking everyone for everything.
5. Take a picture a day.

6. Set a daily gratitude alarm on your phone.
7. Spend time with grateful people.
8. Incorporate prayers of gratitude in one of your routines, chores or activities.
9. Practice St. Ignatius' Prayer of Examen before going to sleep.

The Examen is a method of reviewing your day in the presence of God. It's a time set aside for thankful reflection on where God is in your everyday life. It has five steps, which most people take more or less in order, and it usually takes 15 to 20 minutes per day. Here it is in a nutshell:

- 1. Ask God for light.** *I want to look at my day with God's eyes, not merely my own.*
- 2. Give thanks.** *The day I have just lived is a gift from God. Be grateful for it.*
- 3. Review the day.** *I look back on the day just completed, guided by Holy Spirit.*
- 4. Face your shortcomings.** *I face up to what is wrong-in my life and in me.*
- 5. Look toward the day to come.** *I ask where I need God in the day to come.*

10. Practice Fasting, Serving or Simplicity (www.monterey.church/practices)
11. Initiate gratitude questions/discussions at the dinner table, before bed, etc.
12. Read a book about the Spiritual Practice of Gratitude.
13. Create a Gratitude Wall in your home, office, etc.

D. Additional Gratitude Resources

- *The Practice of Praise*, C.H. Spurgeon
- *The Spirituality of Gratitude*, Joshua Choonmin Kong
- *Practicing Thankfulness*, Sam Crabtree
- *The Joy Model*, Jeff Spadafora

Questions? Email me at: leland@monterey.church

And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. Hebrews 11:6